

ASKING IN HIS NAME.

Jesus says over and over again to his disciples, "Whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that I will do;" "If ye shall ask me anything in my name, that will I do;" "If ye ask anything of the Father, he will give it you in my name;" "In that day ye shall ask in my name: and I say not unto you, that I will pray the Father for you; for the Father himself loveth you, because ye have loved me, and believed that I came forth from the Father." What does all this mean? What is it to ask in the name of Jesus? Is it, as many Christians seem to believe, to conclude a prayer with the set formula, "All which we ask in the name of Jesus"? Or is it something more than this?

The "name" in primitive thought stands for the person bearing that name; it is, in a sense, the person himself; while in our modern and Western thought a "name" is often deemed little more than a label attached to a person, in order to distinguish him from other persons. To know another's name, to have a right to bear that name, to speak and act in that name, is, in primitive thought, to be a sharer of that person's life,—by birth, by marriage, or by covenant adoption,—and so to be, in a peculiar sense, a representative of that person. A son bearing his father's name stands for that father, and rightly expects to be received with respect due to his father. A member of a family or of a tribe is recognized as worthy of the position and honor due to that tribe or family. A soldier of a commander, or a servant of a ruler, coming with a message from his master, does not stand merely on his personal worth, but on the reputation of him whom he represents. Hence to ask, or to come, in the name of another, is, as an Oriental would understand it, and as the Bible would state it, to be a representative of the one whose name is thus borne.

When the high-priest of Israel went before the Lord as the representative of the twelve tribes of Israel, to ask mercy and grace in their behalf, he bore upon his breast, above his heart, a breastplate in which were set four rows of precious stones; "and the stones were according to the names of

the children of Israel, twelve, according to their names; like the engravings of a signet, every one according to his name, for the twelve tribes." And the command for Aaron, as the high priest, was: "Aaron shall bear the names of the children of Israel in the breastplate of judgment upon his heart, when he goeth in unto the holy place, for a memorial before the Lord continually." It was not necessary that Aaron should call over, audibly, the names of every one of the twelve tribes, every time he entered the holy place, in order to come into the presence of the Lord as the representative of those tribes each and all. He was their representative. Their names were in his heart, and their symbols or tokens were above his heart, and for their sakes and in their name he came and pleaded, and made offerings, according to their needs.

Similarly, to day, an officer might come into the presence of an army commander, bearing upon his shoulders the straps of his ranks, and upon his breast the insigna of his corps and his division, and ask a favor, or an order, in the name of his immediate command, and, by his very position, be recognized and received as the representative of that command. Or, again, an American abroad, standing under the folds of the United States flag, might be as truly and as specifically taken as an American, and given honor as a representative of that republic, as if he were to call over in their order the forty-four names of the states of the Union, as the component divisions of the nationality to which he owed allegiance, and from which he claimed protection. It is the being a representative of that which a name represents, and not the calling out the name itself, that constitutes the coming and the asking, in a name.

So, in this matter of coming in the name of Jesus, and of asking in the name of Jesus, it is not the saying over that name, but the representing of that which that name represents, which brings a petitioner within the scope of the specific promises of Jesus. There were those in the days of the apostles who thought, as many Christians now seem to think, that the having power from God was a result of saying over

the name of Jesus, as if it were a magical formula. And persons of this sort "took upon them to name over them which had the evil spirits the name of the Lord Jesus, saying, I adjure you by Jesus whom Paul preacheth." But being thus adjured, in one instance, "the evil spirit answered, and said unto them, Jesus I know, and Paul I know; but who are ye?" and harm came not to the evil spirit, but to those who took the name of Jesus. On the other hand, those who had the spirit of Jesus, and were sharers in his nature, lived, and acted, and spoke, and thought, in his name, and had acceptance with and power from God continually. And those who were thus in his name, were loved for his name, or were hated for his name, by those about them. So it is to day with all who live in the name of Jesus.

The Father looks down upon those who come to him for a blessing, and sees in their faces, and hears in the tones of their voices, and discerns in the throbbings of their hearts, their love for his Son, and their likeness to his Son, and their life in his Son; and, for the sake of that Son whom they represent, he receives them and ministers unto them to the uttermost extent of their needs and of their heart longings. It is not the figure of the cross which they wear above their hearts "in His name," nor is it the form of words with which they conclude their every prayer "in His name," but it is the proof in their heart of hearts that they are one with their Elder Brother in their lives as children of God, that gives them acceptance with God for the sake of his Son. It is not our saying, but our showing, that what we ask is asked in the name of Jesus, that God notes, and that God takes into account. It is in this sense that the model prayer, which Jesus gave for our use, is a prayer in the name of its Framer, although there is in it no verbal mention of his name; and that many a prayer that has not that name in it is more truly in that name than many another prayer that has the name in it, while it is not offered in that name.

If we would ask anything in the name of Jesus, let us be sure that we want it for his sake, and that it is something he would ask for us, if he were actually standing in our stead and putting up our petitions for us. Coming thus to the Father, we come in the name, in the spirit, and in the likeness of his Son; and the Father will hear us, and will answer us, because we are representatives of his Son, who is the supreme representative of himself.—*S. S. Times.*